

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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THE SOURCE EVALUATIONS IN THIS REPORT ARE DEFINITIVE.
THE APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.
(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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1. Two leaders of South Africa's Torch Commando, Louis Kane-Berman and Douglas Wilson,¹ have stated that the United Party has a "very good chance" of unseating the Nationalist Party in the April general elections. Their assumption is based on the following factors:
 - a. A surprising number of English-speaking voters supported the Nationalist Party in the last election in the belief that the country needed a change of administration. Most of these persons are now expected to vote for the United Party.
 - b. The Government's recent efforts to enact the Separate Representation of Voters Act is expected to bring the "colored" population into the ranks of the United Party. In the last election, the "colored" of the Cape Province supported the Nationalists.
 - c. Recent native riots should awaken the voters to the inherent dangers of the present policy of apartheid.
2. Kane-Berman and Wilson discount the by-election of June 1952 in Wakkerstroom which the Nationalists won by a sizeable majority.² The Torch Commando leaders claim that the area, despite Nationalist Party arguments to the contrary, was not a United Party stronghold, and that the Government circulated false reports concerning the intimidation of voters by the Torch Commando.
3. Regarding the Torch Commando and its objectives, Kane-Berman denied that they were planning to disband if the United Party gained a victory in the elections.³ Until the country has reached a sound political equilibrium and a workable native policy, he said, the Torch Commando would continue its struggle.
4. That the Torch Commando is a militaristic organization and has been infiltrated by Communists was very emphatically denied by both Kane-Berman and Wilson. They admit that a few Communists may have penetrated the lower echelons, but they add that all

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the officers are carefully screened and are definitely not sympathetic to Communism. They also deny that the members of the organization are being formed into military-type units or being instructed in the use of arms.⁴

5. Kane-Berman proudly points out that at least 60 percent of the Torch Commando's 260,000 members are Afrikaans. Therefore, it is not an anti-Afrikaans' organization.

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- 25X1A 1. [REDACTED] Comment. Louis Kane-Berman is the chairman of the National Executive of the Torch Commando, and Douglas Wilson is a member of the Action Committee of the National Executive. Both men are attorneys.
- 25X1A 2. [REDACTED] Comment. The Nationalist Party has acclaimed the Wakkerstroom by-election as an indication of the growing popularity of the Malan administration.
- 25X1A 3. [REDACTED] Comment. Kane-Berman was recently misquoted as saying that the Torch Commando would disband if the United Party wins in April.
- 25X1A 4. [REDACTED] Comment. This information contradicts other reports which indicate that Torch Commando is organized on military lines. [REDACTED]

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